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Policy Update highlights the latest research, analysis, and statistics from the Social Security Administration's Office of Policy. It appears quarterly on the Web (<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy>) and in each issue of the *Social Security Bulletin*. It includes summaries of all recent products and identifies work done by outside researchers funded through a cooperative agreement with SSA. Information about the availability of the publications is given in each section.

Publications

Documents from the Office of Policy are available at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy>. For information about the availability of printed copies, please e-mail op.publications@ssa.gov, call 202-358-6274, or fax 202-358-6192.

Economics of Social Security

Social Security as a Retirement Resource for Near-Retirees

ORES Working Paper No. 106 (released May 2005)

This paper analyzes Social Security benefits as a retirement resource for near-retirees. It looks at how the average values of several measures of benefits such as Social Security wealth and earnings replacement rates have changed from earlier cohorts to today's near-retiree cohort, examines differences among demographic and socioeconomic groups within cohorts, and discusses reasons for these changes and differences. The paper uses greatly improved data (actual earnings histories) to produce more accurate measures of benefits; it also uses some new benefit measures. Key findings include the following: (1) average real Social Security wealth increases markedly for successive age cohorts, primarily because of increases in average real earnings; (2) replacement rates fall for recent cohorts, primarily because of the phase-in of increases in the age of eligibil-

ity for full benefits; and (3) median Social Security wealth is much higher for women than for men because women live longer.

Online

HTML: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/workingpapers/wp106.html>

PDF: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/workingpapers/wp106.pdf>

Geographic Information

Congressional Statistics

(released June 2005)

These annual fact sheets present data on the Social Security and Supplemental Security Income programs. Data are given for the number of people receiving benefits and the amount of total monthly payments made to persons in the United States, in each state, and in each congressional district within the state.

Online: http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/factsheets/cong_stats/2004/index.html

Reform of Social Security

Poverty-level Annuitization Requirements in Social Security Proposals Incorporating Personal Retirement Accounts

Issue Paper No. 2005-01 (released April 2005)

In the current discussions of Social Security reform, voluntary personal retirement accounts have been proposed. Recent research and debate have focused on several aspects of these accounts, including how such accounts would affect aggregate saving, system finances, and benefit levels. Little attention, however, has been paid to policies that would govern the distribution of account balances. This analysis considers such policies with respect to the annuitization of account balances at retirement using the Social Security Administration's Modeling Income in the New Term (MINT) model and a modified version of a recent

legislative proposal to evaluate the effects of partial annuitization requirements.

Online

HTML: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/issuepapers/ip2005-01.html>

PDF: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/issuepapers/ip2005-01.pdf>

Supplemental Security Income

State Assistance Programs for SSI Recipients

(released April 2005)

This annual publication presents data on selected characteristics of mandatory and optional state assistance programs for SSI recipients. It focuses on eligibility provisions and the maximum levels of assistance for individuals and couples who receive supplementary payments.

Online: http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssi_st_asst/2004/index.html

Other

Social Security Bulletin, Vol. 65 No. 4

(released May 2005)

Includes articles on:

- Reassessing the Relationship Between Disability Insurance and Workers' Compensation
- Workers' Compensation, Social Security Disability Insurance, and the Offset: A Fact Sheet
- Workers' Compensation: A Background for Social Security Professionals
- Compensating Workers for Permanent Partial Disabilities
- Benefit Adequacy in State Workers' Compensation Programs
- The Fraction of Disability Caused at Work
- Design and Implementation Issues in Swedish Individual Pension Accounts
- Introduction and Overview from—2005 Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal OASDI Trust Funds

Online: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v65n4/index.html>

Books

Kalman Rupp and Paul S. Davies, "A Long-Term View of Health Status, Disabilities, Mortality, and Participation in the DI and SSI Disability Programs," in S.W. Polachek, ed., *Research and Labor Economics*, vol. 23, *Accounting for Worker Well-Being* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, JAI Press, 2004).

Additional information about this book is available at http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/bookdescription.cws_home/703233/description#description.

Papers from the Retirement Research Consortium

The Retirement Research Consortium comprises three multidisciplinary centers that are funded through a cooperative agreement with the Social Security Administration. The centers are located at Boston College, the University of Michigan, and the National Bureau of Economic Research. These centers provide research and policy analysis to inform decisionmakers about issues critical to Social Security's retirement program.

Boston College

The following papers are available on the Center for Retirement Research Web site (<http://www.bc.edu/crr>) or by e-mail from crr@bc.edu.

Projecting Immigration: A Survey of the Current State of Practice and Theory

Neil Howe and Richard Jackson

Report of the CSIS Global Aging Initiative (April 2005)

Local Labor Market Conditions and Retirement Behavior

Dan A. Black and Xiaoli Liang

BCRRC Working Paper No. 2005-08 (May 2005)

Validation Study of Earnings Data in the SIPP—Do Older Workers Have Larger Measurement Error?

Peter Gottschalk and Minh Huynh

BCRRC Working Paper No. 2005-07 (May 2005)

Investment Choice in the Swedish Premium Pension Accounts

Mårten Palme, Annika Sundén, and Paul Söderlind

BCRRC Working Paper No. 2005-06 (April 2005)

University of Michigan

Summaries of the projects on which the following papers are based are available on the Retirement Research Center Web site (http://www.mrrc.isr.umich.edu/content.cfm?section=research&content=research_projects). The papers can be requested by e-mail from mrrc@isr.umich.edu.

Enhancing the Quality of Data on Income and Wealth

Honggao Cao, Daniel Hill, F. Thomas Juster, and Michael Perry

MRRC Working Paper No. 2005-101 (June 2005)

Knowledge and Preference in Reporting Financial Information

Honggao Cao and Daniel H. Hill

MRRC Working Paper No. 2005-100 (April 2005)

Do Individual Accounts Postpone Retirement: Evidence from Chile

Estelle James and Alejandra Cox Edwards

MRRC Working Paper No. 2005-098 (April 2005)

Social Security Administration

Office of Policy

Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics

500 E Street, SW, 8th Floor

Washington, DC 20254

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